

4-1-1982

Poems

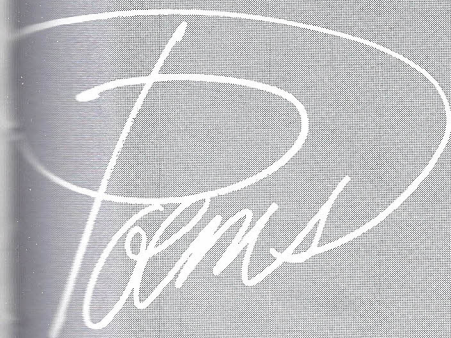
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RE-BIRTH

I

The Odyssey of journeying through
space!
Can one deny his yearnings,
To Float,
To Fly,
To move motionless through
nothingness?
This totally expresses the All.
Only in our dreams and in quiet
meditation
Can we unite to the awesome Universal
One
To Sing,
To Laugh,
To prance and endlessly dance
To the tune of life and its creation.

II

Words, like feelings, create pictures of
the mind;
Remembering that both words and
feelings can be deceptive,
One runs into many diverse interpreta-
tions of each.
Truth is the only answer to which we
may rely.
For it is in Divine Truth that all
answers lie.

III

Seeking to find the essence of oneself,
We tend to regress first, then soar on
wings of consciousness;
One step, then two, then three . . . then
four,
Before long there is no need for
counting anymore.
Embedded in the soul of man is the
secrets of Ancient Y'ore.
One life lived, to share, to give, to
return
undoubtedly to the core.

E. Mellenia DeCoteau Jones
Howard University

Errors of the Essay

31

Beware of the proverbial essay
When it cries out in distress
When it cries out in pain
When it cries out in anguish
Its structure is laden with gastro-
conventional holes.

There are the organizational holes
Indecisive introductions
Squinting substantial parts
Capitulated conclusions
Gnawing at the backbone of unity,
coherence, emphasis.

There are the grammatical holes
Sentence insensitivities
Pronoun pranks
Mechanical monstrosities
Punctuating the body with verbal
vermins.

Then there are the stylistic holes
Diction dummies
Awkward phrases
Meek metaphors
Inflaming the reader with sentence
sores.

Beware of the proverbial essay
Soothe its sagging sentences
Give it rhetoric relief
Spell it R O L A I D S
And Bacon will beam again.

Janet R. Griffin
Howard University

32 **On Seeing the Mississippi
For the First Time**

The driver said "You ought to go down
see the Mississippi.

Lot of chemical plants along the shore
and an oil refinery.

But in the antebellum days
it was cotton and sugar cane,
you know?"

I know.

After the all-night rain
through the new-dawn haze
I walked up on the levee which
before now was only a word.

Wide, elevated, still, steel
gray-flowing waters.

Few shore lights through
still-bleak dawning.

Freighter in the unclear offing.

Ghostly bridgeway looming beyond.

How many secrets untold, Mississippi?

Ripples. Not one do I hear.

And how many Black bodies

captured in your murk

whose spirit-flight disconsolate
arises?

Then I saw cane. Karantha. Becky
and her babies.

Riverboat dandies and bales of cotton.

Bent aching backs and worn shoeless
feet.

Felt old new pain the sharp cool
of your waters cannot soothe.

Escaped time brought me back
to the levee.

Desolate. Feeling.

Slowly, steadily leaving

deep breathing

magnetically backward-glancing with
long-looks

searching to find what was not there.

Calm does not hide your shame,

Mississippi.

And though the sun shine, will I ever
see you in a different light?

Njeri Nuru

Howard University

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